



COVID-19

CORONAVIRUS UPDATE

March 16, 2020

COVID-19 impact to staff

What's new?

Throughout BC, the focus remains slowing the course of the COVID-19 pandemic. New public health measures to keep our communities and health care settings safe are rapidly evolving.

The following update provides clarity on previous recommendations of self-isolation for Providence Health Care staff returning from travel outside of Canada, as well as an update on proper use of personal protective equipment (PPE).

Self-isolation and staff returning from travel update

The Provincial Health Officer (PHO) is asking health care workers who return from travel outside Canada and are not essential to the delivery of patient care to self-isolate at home for 14 days.

To clarify, PHC views all staff as working in health care and each of us as essential to the delivery of exceptional patient care. However, we would much prefer that staff stayed at home and worked from there for two weeks.

As a leader, if you determine that the presence of your staff at work is critical to the ongoing operation of service, please advise them that they are able to come back to work but will need to wear a mask.

With this clarity, please have a conversation with your staff member who is returning from travel (unless they have travelled to Hubei Province in China, Italy or Iran in which case they must self-isolate) to determine whether they are required to return to work, if it is feasible for them to work from home in self-isolation or if they are required to self-isolate at home.

Things to consider when making this determination:

- Whether your staff member is asymptomatic.
- Whether your staff member has a high risk of exposure (through close contact with a symptomatic person or their body fluids).
- Whether your unit can ensure continuity of care or continue to provide excellent service without this staff member.

Next steps:

- If you determine your staff member is required to come to work, they must wear a mask.
- If you determine it is feasible for your staff member to work from home, please facilitate such arrangements instead of a general leave of absence.
- If you determine it is not required for your staff member to come to work and is not feasible for them to work from home, they will be placed on paid general leave.

All staff who have travelled outside of Canada are required to self-monitor daily and use appropriate

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) when providing care.

If any staff member – clinical or not – develops symptoms, they must immediately put on a mask, finish any essential services and self-isolate. Any staff who develop symptoms should contact the regional medical health officer for Vancouver Coastal at 1-604-527-4893.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) update

As we enter a more rapidly growing phase of COVID-19, we need to prepare to meet the additional demands for PPE, particularly N95 respirators, surgical and procedure masks and Microsan. At PHC, it is essential we all take steps to maintain our stock.

Due to extreme high demand for PPE throughout the system, we ask all PHC leaders to:

- Continually, encourage proper PPE usage.
- Know when to properly use PPE, and when not to use PPE to reduce unnecessary usage.
- Ensure staff know the [proper sequencing for donning and removing PPE](#) (i.e., staff who have been at the bedside with PPE on, must remove it (gown, mask or respirator, goggles or face shield, gloves, etc.) to walk away.
- It is advised that the only time you can be moving through hallways and non-patient care areas with PPE on is when you are moving with a patient.
- If your staff need clarity on PPE usage, encouraged them to speak to you, refer to the various online resources (see links below) or contact organizational resources (IPAC, OH&S, etc.).
 - [Donning & Doffing Personal Protective Equipment \(PPE\)](#)
 - [How To Don & Doff Personal Protective Equipment \(PPE\) - video](#)
 - [How To Remove Personal Protective Equipment \(PPE\) - video](#)
 - [Droplet & Contact Sign](#)
 - [VCH Practice Alert - Appropriate use of Procedure Masks and N95 Respirators](#)
 - [Aerosol Generating Medical Procedures \(AGMP\) Best Practice Guideline](#)

All health authorities and health care partners are working hard to ensure adequate PPE supplies are available to ensure sustained protection and safety of staff, patients and residents. Proper usage of PPE by our staff is critical in ensuring we can meet the expected increasing demands.

Questions?

If you have questions or concerns, please email COVID-19@providencehealth.bc.ca

Information and resource links:

PHC has launched a website for staff, medical staff, and researchers to address concerns, questions, protocols and guidelines around sick-leave and compensation-in-lieu for COVID-19. [Click here](#) to view the website. This website will be updated daily and is accessible from work and home on your mobile or desktop devices.